IN THE CLAIMS

1-22. (Cancelled)

23. (Currently amended) A method of forming a vehicle design index, comprising:

~~automatically~~ gathering, by a computer, from a plurality of computerized tools, information on ~~substantially all major~~ elements of a vehicle, wherein the gathering includes retrieving from at least one of the computerized tools fewer than all the elements of the vehicle described by the tool; and

storing the information in the index.

24. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 23, wherein gathering the information comprises gathering location information of the ~~major~~ elements.

25. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 23, wherein gathering the information comprises gathering interconnection information of the ~~major~~ elements.

26. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 23, wherein gathering the information comprises gathering references to documents describing the ~~major~~ elements.

27. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 23, wherein a company designing the vehicle comprises at least one group of workers that are restricted from viewing at least some information relating to the vehicle and wherein gathering the information comprises gathering information which is not restricted from viewing by substantially any of the workers of the company.

28. (Original) A method according to claim 27, wherein gathering the information comprises gathering from tools which carry information restricted from viewing by at least one group of workers within the company designing the vehicle.

29. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 23, wherein storing the information comprises storing the information in a database.

30. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 23, wherein gathering the information comprises gathering information on elements of an aircraft.

31. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 23, wherein ~~automatically~~ gathering the information comprises ~~automatically~~ gathering the information periodically.

32. (Currently Amended) A method of providing information between workers designing a vehicle, comprising:

selecting fewer than all the physical elements of the vehicle to serve as major elements that represent the vehicle;

gathering, for each of the~~a plurality of~~ major elements ~~of the vehicle~~, information regarding the element, including an indication~~a plurality of different indications~~ of the relative assembly of the element and a ~~a plurality of~~ references to a workers in charge of the element;

storing the gathered information in a database having records only for the major elements; and

searching the database for information on one or more of the major elements.

33. (Original) A method according to claim 32, wherein gathering the information comprises gathering references to documents related to the major elements.

34. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 32, wherein the ~~plurality of different~~ indications of the relative assembly of the element comprises at least one indication of the location of the element.

35. (Original) A method according to claim 34, wherein the at least one indication of the location of the element comprises an indication of the coordinates of the element within the vehicle.

36. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 34, wherein the at least one indication of the location of the element comprises an indication of an access door to the element within the vehicle.

37. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 34, wherein the at least one indication of

the location of the element comprises an indication of a compartment in which the element is located.

38. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 32, wherein the ~~plurality of different~~ indications of the relative assembly of the element comprises a list of the major elements with which the element is connected.

39. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 32, wherein the ~~plurality of different~~ indications of the relative assembly of the element comprises an indication of a system to which the element belongs.

40. (Original) A method according to claim 39, wherein the indication of the system to which the element belongs comprises an indication of a relative function of the element within the system.

41. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 72~~32~~, comprising running a verification routine which finds design faults, on the data contained within the database.

42. (Original) A method according to claim 41, wherein running the verification routine comprises running a routine which checks for elements which are distanced from each other less than a minimal allowed distance.

43. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 32, wherein the database does not include diagrams or drawings.

44. (Previously presented) An aircraft designed using the method of providing information of claim 32.

45. (Currently amended) A method of labeling major elements of an aircraft, comprising:

selecting elements of the vehicle to serve as major elements that represent the vehicle;

determining for each major element a system to which the element belongs; and

assigning each of the major elements with a code which is unique to each occurrence of the element in the aircraft, responsive to the system to which the element belongs.

46. (Original) A method according to claim 45, wherein the major elements include elements belonging to the structure of the aircraft.

47. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 45, wherein assigning the code comprises assigning a code having at least three digits in common with digits of a part number of the element, for ~~substantially all~~at least most of the major elements of the aircraft.

48. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 45, wherein assigning the code comprises assigning a plurality of codes to at least one single element.

49. (Original) A method according to claim 48, wherein the plurality of codes assigned to the at least one single element comprise codes which represent connection ends of the element.

50. (Original) A method of referencing workers working on an aircraft, comprising:

assigning configuration management codes to various aspects of the aircraft;

assigning each part of the aircraft, a part number code which includes the assigned configuration management code of the aspect to which the part belongs; and

assigning worker codes which include the configuration management code of the aspect on which the worker works.

51. (Original) A method according to claim 50, wherein the configuration management codes comprise three digits.

52. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 50, comprising preparing a responsibility matrix which references workers by the assigned worker codes.

53. (New) A method according to claim 32, wherein gathering the information comprises gathering a plurality of different indications of the relative assembly of the element.

54. (New) A method according to claim 32, wherein gathering the information comprises gathering at least three levels of a hierarchy of systems and sub-systems to which the major elements belong.

55. (New) A method according to claim 32, wherein selecting the major elements comprises selecting only elements which are handled by personnel from a plurality of different departments.

56. (New) A method according to claim 32, wherein the indication of the relative assembly comprises an indication in each record of the major elements which are functionally related to the element described by the record.

57. (New) A method according to claim 32, wherein storing the gathered information in the database comprises storing in a database having a total storage space of less than 1Gbyte.

58. (New) A method according to claim 57, wherein storing the gathered information in the database comprises storing in a database having a total storage space of less than 100Mbytes.

59. (New) A method according to claim 32, wherein selecting the major elements comprises selecting less than 10% of the physical elements of the vehicle.

60. (New) A method according to claim 33, wherein the references to the documents comprise hypertext links.

61. (New) A method according to claim 33, wherein the references to the documents comprise references to diagrams including the elements.

62. (New) A method according to claim 33, wherein the references to the documents comprise references to procurement invoices of the elements.

63. (New) A method according to claim 32, wherein each of the elements is identified in the database by a unique code which is assigned according to a functionality of the element.

64. (New) A method according to claim 32, wherein gathering the information comprises gathering from at least one computerized tool such that an update of information in the at least one computerized tool automatically updates the database.

65. (New) A method according to claim 64, wherein changing the content of the index is allowed only through the gathering from the computerized tools.

66. (New) A method according to claim 32, comprising incorporating output information of at least one data evaluation program into a form of the database.

67. (New) A method according to claim 66, wherein the at least one data evaluation program comprises a design-to-cost program.

68. (New) A method according to claim 66, wherein the at least one data evaluation program comprises a design-for-manufacture-and-assembly program.

69. (New) A method according to claim 32, wherein storing the information comprises storing on a portable computer.

70. (New) A method according to claim 32, wherein the database is open for viewing by all workers working on the vehicle, while changes to the database are allowed only to specific workers responsible for changing the database.

71. (New) A method according to claim 32, wherein the database is used by workers to view information on systems of the vehicle other than they are responsible for.

72. (New) A method of providing information between workers designing a vehicle, comprising:

selecting less than 10% of the physical elements of the vehicle to serve as major elements of the vehicle;

gathering, for each of the major elements, information regarding the element, including an indication of the relative assembly of the element;

storing the gathered information in a database, having records only for the major elements; and

searching the database for information on one or more of the major elements.

73. (New) A method according to claim 72, wherein gathering the information comprises

gathering at least three levels of a hierarchy of systems and sub-systems to which the major elements belong.

74. (New) A method according to claim 72, wherein selecting the major elements comprises selecting less than 1% of the physical elements of the vehicle.

75. (New) A method according to claim 23, wherein the index is open for viewing by all workers working on the vehicle, while changes to the index are allowed only to workers responsible for changing the data of the index.

76. (New) A method according to claim 23, wherein gathering the information comprises gathering information on both electrical and mechanical elements.

77. (New) Apparatus for forming a vehicle design index, comprising:

an input interface for receiving data from a plurality of computerized tools;

a memory for storing the index; and

a computer configured to gather, from a plurality of computerized tools, through the input interface, information on fewer than all the elements of the vehicle described by the tool, and to store the gathered information in the memory.

78. (New) An aircraft system, comprising:

An aircraft; and

a database identifying the major elements of the aircraft with codes assigned according to the method of claim 45.